

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action dated August 29, 2003. For the following reasons, this Application should be considered in condition for allowance and the case passed to issue.

Claims 1-4 and 6-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Francovick. This rejection is hereby traversed and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof are respectfully requested. The following is a comparison of the present invention as currently claimed with the Francovick reference.

The invention, as provided, for example in claim 1, relates to a method of operating a slot machine and comprises generating a first game result pursuant to a first game, by displaying a combination of symbols randomly selected from a first set of symbols, using circuitry within the slot machine. The first game result is displayed on a video screen of the slot machine. If this first game result meets certain criteria, initiating a bonus game, this bonus game being other than a random selection of symbols by the circuitry so as not to be a version of the first game, the bonus game generates and displays a bonus game result using the circuitry and displaying the bonus game result on the video screen. The generating and displaying of the first game result and the bonus game result are performed by the same hardware in the slot machine so as to require no additional hardware to generate and display the bonus game result. An award is granted to a player based on the first game result and the bonus game result.

Independent claim 4 relates to a slot machine, and also requires that circuitry is provided for initiating a bonus game, if the first game result meets certain criteria. Similarly, independent claim 17 requires the association of a particular first game result with generating a count value. Further, independent claim 24 requires that if the first game result matches a predetermined

value, a bonus game is initiated. Likewise, in claim 27, circuitry is provided that is configured to initiate a bonus game if the first game result matches a predetermined value.

It is respectfully asserted that Francovick fails to disclose at least these features of the presently claimed invention. The rejection of claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) requires the identical disclosure in a single prior art reference of each and every element or step of a claimed invention. As part of this analysis, the Examiner must (a) identify the elements of the claims, (b) determining the meaning of the elements in light of the specification and prosecution history, and (c) identify corresponding elements disclosed in the allegedly anticipating reference. It is respectfully submitted that this burden has not been discharged in the present Office Action. Moreover, there are significant differences between Francovick and the invention defined in the independent claims of the present Application.

Francovick, Australian Publication No. AU 9213023A, relates to a jackpot apparatus for a poker machine that provides a random payment awarding apparatus connected to a number of poker machines each adapted to produce an incrementing signal at each operation. As best understood, Francovick introduces a random value. Counting means are provided for counting operations of the poker machines. It is stated in the Publication that an incrementing signal is provided at each operation. When the number of operations equals the random number, the bonus is awarded to the person who made that operation. It is equivalent to being the one millionth customer walking through a door and being awarded a prize for such an act. However, it is not a bonus game in the same meaning as required by the claims of the present invention. As noted above, the claims require that a bonus game is initiated if a first game result matches a predetermined value. In other words, the present invention requires a result of a first game to be a specified value before a bonus game is initiated. There is a condition, therefore, to entering the

bonus game. This is not so with Francovick. Instead, every operation of a machine Francovick acts to produce an incrementing signal. There is no condition that must be met for sending the incrementing signal. Hence, there is no initiation of a bonus game if there is a first game result that matches a predetermined value.

The remaining dependent claims further define and limit the independent claims and add features that are clearly not identically disclosed in Francovick. In fact, the Office Action utterly fails to show how Francovick discloses the claims of the present invention. Instead, the rejection merely recites what Francovick discloses, but makes no attempt to show how these features of Francovick relate to the specific claimed elements of the present invention.

For all of the above reasons, the rejection of claims 1-4 and 6-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be reconsidered and withdrawn. Such action is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserted that the word “bonus game” is misused throughout the specification and suggested a term called “bonus value” or “bonus amount” to replace the term “bonus game”. The Examiner understood that only one game was disclosed and the bonus game, as called, is nothing but a value that is awarded upon a counting of predetermined events. This understanding of the specification is quite in error. Applicant painstakingly described in the response filed on April 18, 2003, the bonus game of the present invention. Further, the use of the term “bonus game” is replete throughout the detailed description, as is the term main game. As one example, see the embodiment of Fig. 7 in which a display glass 702 shows one blinking letter and one of a plurality of the word “BONUS”. This single blinking letter may be the letter N shown in the bottom left word BONUS in Fig. 7. In another embodiment, a plurality of letters may be blinking. If one of the linked gaming machines generates and displays a bonus hit combination while a letter is blinking, that blinking

letter gets locked in and becomes constantly illuminated. Another letter then begins to blink. The display glass 702 for all the linked gaming machines have the same letters illuminated. If a player completes the word bonus by generating and displaying a bonus hit combination while the fifth letter in the word bonus is blinking, that particular player receives a bonus award. See another example of Fig. 8, in which certain symbol combinations light up a square in a grid. The first player whose machine causes a full horizontal, vertical, or diagonal row of squares to be illuminated wins a bonus award. This is somewhat akin to the familiar game of Bingo. These examples from the specification amply demonstrate that the Examiner's understanding of the specification regarding the term "bonus game" is incomplete and/or flawed. In other words, the term "bonus game" is more than just a value that is awarded upon a counting of predetermined events. Further, a number of different types of games are disclosed. And there is a second game being played by the player, as the examples of at least Figs. 7 and 8 show. It is respectfully submitted that the terms "main game" and "bonus game" would be clear to one of ordinary skill in the art based upon the extensive specification and examples provided therein.

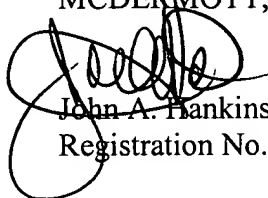
For all of the above reasons, this Application should be considered in condition for allowance and the case passed to issue. If there are any questions regarding this Amendment or the Application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated to expedite the prosecution of the Application.

09/116,425

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Hankins", is written over the printed name and registration number.

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